



2014 Cow Creek Allotment NMFS Monitoring Report

Prepared by Salmon Challis National Forest Range and Fisheries staff

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1. Overview of proposed action and actual management (e.g., livestock numbers, on-off dates for each Unit, etc.).

Permitted Use

Grazing on this allotment will involve up to 295 cow/calf pairs under a restoration grazing system with grazing occurring anytime between June 1 and October 10.

Permittee	No. and Class	Permit Type	Season of Use	Head Months
Hubert & Sara Miller	180 Cow/Calf	Term	6/01 – 10/10	781
Stan & Trish Dowton	115 Cow/Calf	Term	6/01 – 10/10	499

Authorized Use for 2014

Permittee	No. and Class	Permit Type	Season of Use	Head Months
Hubert & Sara Miller	160 Cow/Calf	Term	6/01 – 10/10	568
Stan & Trish Dowton	120 Cow/Calf ¹	Term	6/15 – 10/10	426

¹ Stan & Trish Dowton are grazing five more cow/calf pairs than permitted, but they are coming off 50 days earlier and using less head months than permitted.

Pasture Rotation

The allotment consists of the Cow Creek, North Fork Cow Creek, and Allison Creek units. Each pasture is rested one year in three. The on dates listed below are only a guide. Actual turn out will be when range readiness occurs. Moving off the allotment must occur before utilization standards have been met and no later than the scheduled off-date.

Unit	Number	On-Date	Off-Date
Cow Creek	295	06/01	08/05
North Fork Cow Creek	295	08/06	09/20
Allison Creek	Rest/Trail	Rest/Trail	



Actual use for 2014 season displayed below.

Pasture	Number	Season	AUMs
Cow Creek	129 Cow/Calf ¹	6/1-7/22	488
	55 Cow/Calf ²	6/17-8/28	
	53 Yearlings ²	6/17-8/28	
Cow Creek	25 (Heifers) ¹	6/9-7/22	63
	9 Cow/Calf ²	8/29-9/27	
	5 Yearlings ²	8/29-9/27	
Allison Creek	0	Rest	0
North Fork Cow Creek	154 Cow/Calf ¹	7/22-9/18	394

¹Hubert Miller Use Numbers; ²Dowton, Stan & Trish Use Numbers

- Results from all implementation and effectiveness monitoring identified as part of the proposed action and this Opinion (term and condition 1), including required annual use indicator monitoring (i.e., stubble height, riparian shrub utilization, streambank alteration), photo point monitoring, seral condition, bank stability, water temperature, sediment, and W:D.

Implementation

2014 End of the Season Monitoring Results.

Unit	Indicator	Standard	2014 End of Season Results
North Fork Cow Creek	Greenline	> 4"	4.6"
	Bank Alteration	< 20%	13%
	Woody Browse	< 30%	27.7%
Allison Creek	Greenline	>4"	N/A
	Bank Alteration	<20%	
	Woody Browse	<30%	
Cow Creek/ MIM location is on the South Fork of Cow Creek	Greenline	> 6"	7.4"
	Bank Alteration	< 10%	21%
	Woody Browse	< 30%	15%



Effectiveness

Long term monitoring was conducted in the North Fork of Cow Creek in 2014. Effectiveness monitoring between 2010 and 2014 in the North Fork of Cow Creek demonstrates a decrease in natural stream shade provided by woody vegetation, although 83% of the overstory on the green line was classified as mature in 2014.

Long Term Effectiveness Monitoring North Fork Cow Creek	2010	2014
Greenline Ecological Status	20 Early Seral	68 Late Seral
Wetland Rating	41 Poor	62 Good
Winward Greenline Stability Rating	3.63 Poor	5.83 Mid
Streambank Stability	27%	49 %
Greenline to Greenline Width	5.1 m	5.4 m
Shade Index	0.12 Very Low	0.08 Very Low
Woody Age Class	Seedlings: 29% Young: 39% Mature: 33%	Seedlings: 8% Young: 9% Mature: 83%

- 1. Discussion of any unauthorized use and/or any maintenance issues related to fences or water developments.**
None
- 2. Brief review of Allotment compliance with established annual use indicators and the terms and conditions from this Opinion including a discussion on specific successes and failures.**

Failures: Both permittees failed to meet bank alteration standards on the South Fork of Cow Creek. On July 17 after a range inspection, the range technicians recommend to the permittees that they needed to move their livestock to the next unit and that timely response by the range rider(s) was necessary to avoid exceeding utilization standards. The permittees had also placed salt within 60 feet of the stream and were informed of the



violation and told that action was required to deter cattle from this area of high concentration to prevent further degradation of stream bank stability at this site (see photographs below). The placement of salt issue, first addressed in 2012 and again in 2014, violates the Permittees' Management Responsibilities in the AOI to keep salting locations at least ¼ mile to ½ mile from riparian areas, water places, meadows, and other areas where cattle naturally congregate. On July 22, the permittees were notified again by phone of the violations and told they needed to move their cows within three days. These issues will be emphasized with permittees in the 2015 AOI meeting.

Successes: Permittees Dowton and Miller continue to be active, participating stewards of the allotment, in conjunction with the Forest Service, to improve grazing strategies. Unfortunately, the suggestions made by the permittees do not comply with Salmon-Challis NF plan and the Cow Creek BA. Permittees responded to FS recommendations to leave the Cow Creek pasture early to avoid exceeding utilization standards. When they moved their livestock to the next unit, they either did not remove all of the cows on this unit or cows were coming back into the unit from the North Fork of Cow Creek, which led to the exceedance of the bank alteration standard.

3. Any relevant information that becomes available regarding Snake River Basin steelhead or spring/summer Chinook salmon habitat trends and/or spawning and rearing locations that would modify the assumptions made in this Opinion or result in effects not considered.

No additional information became available in 2014.

4. A clear description of compliance with the terms and conditions contained in this incidental take statement.

1. To implement RPM #1, the SCNF shall ensure that:

- a. The proposed action, including all described conservation measures, monitoring, and adaptive management processes have been implemented as described in the BA and proposed action section of this Opinion.

Yes.

- b. NMFS has been provided written notice of the annual use indicators that are applied in each of the three Units after they were established.

See the above 2014 End of the Season Monitoring Results table for standards applied to each unit.



- c. The Allotment permittees or their employees have received training to appropriately implement the move triggers identified in the proposed action.

Yes.

- d. Annual meetings were conducted with the permittees to discuss specific actions necessary to minimize livestock use in areas believed to be contributing excess sediment to action area streams.

The SCNF and the permittees continue to consider methods such as, but not limited to: temporary electric fencing, permanent fencing, increased riding, and avoidance to allow adequate habitat recovery in identified 'hot spots'.

- e. Riders took all practicable measures to keep cattle on existing roadways and trails during trailing operations between Units and on/off the Allotment.

No known infractions in 2014.

- f. All exclosures drift fences, and water developments on the Allotment were properly maintained and functioned as intended.

No known infractions in 2014.

- g. Turnout dates, move triggers, and annual use indicators, as well as responsible parties, were outlined in the AOI to the permittee.

Yes. Permittees were advised to move earlier than permitted dates to avoid exceeding utilization standards in Cow Creek.

2. To implement RPM #2 (monitoring and reporting), the SCNF shall ensure that:

- a. Each Allotment Unit's DMA or MIM site was monitored to determine compliance with all identified annual use indicators in the proposed action or developed following baseline conditions evaluations scheduled for the 2014 field season.

One site was monitored in 2014 for long term monitoring, and 2 sites were monitored for annual use. Stream bank alteration standards were exceeded at the South Fork of Cow Creek monitoring site for end-of-season annual use.

- b. An end-of-year report has been sent to NMFS.

Yes



5. Any management recommendations for subsequent years.

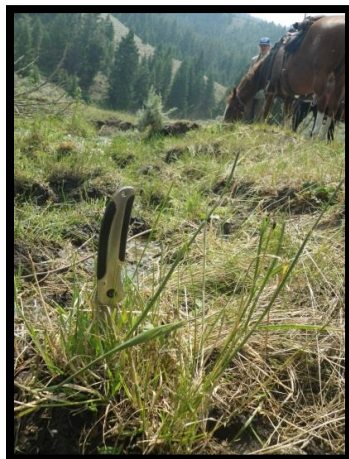
Ocular analysis by range technicians suggested under-utilization of the uplands- they were “virtually untouched”- and recommend that the permittees relocate to the North Fork of Cow Creek pasture earlier than AOI schedule to avoid exceeding standards in Cow Creek pasture. The permittees need to monitor triggers to move and to avoid standards being exceeded. To accomplish this, the permittees will need to increase riding days on the allotment and ensure pastures and the allotment are cleaned of all livestock to avoid exceeding standards.



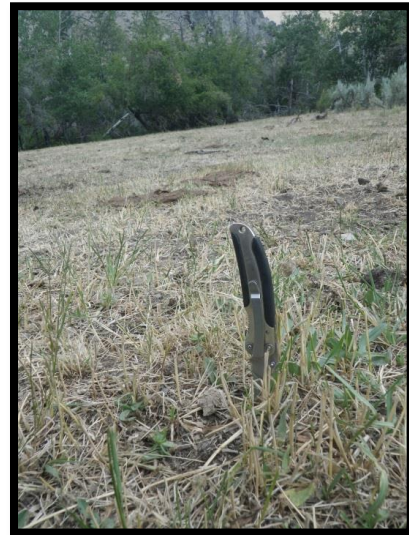
PHOTOS:



Two views of the salting location adjacent to a tributary of the South Fork of Cow Creek. No salt currently present.



Utilization in South Fork of Cow Creek is moderate-heavy. Stubble heights range from 2-4" on 7-22-2014.



Areas adjacent to riparian areas (left: spring complex, right: along South Fork Cow Creek) were heavily utilized (SH~1").